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DAYTIME VISION BY THE MOTH, *EXYRA RIDINGSI* (RILEY)[1]

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Specimens of the Noctuid moth, *Exyra ridingsi* (Riley), were observed by Jones (1904, 1907) resting within the leaves of the pitcher plant, *Sarracenia flava* L., at Summerville, South Carolina. In an area abounding in plants of this species, he found that when a moth was dislodged from a leaf, it would fly quickly to another leaf, alight outside near the rim, and run in over the edge.

At 10:30 A.M. on 16 June, 1964, I found a specimen of *E. ridingsi* within a leaf of *S. flava* growing in a grassy clearing in a bog about 8 miles inland from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. When disturbed, the moth darted out of the leaf and straight to the opening of a leaf of another pitcher plant 30 feet away. When again disturbed, the moth darted back to the first plant, but into a different leaf. These 2 plants were the only ones of this species within sight, and there was nothing to block the view between them.

Further examination revealed 2 other specimens of the moth in other leaves of the plants. When disturbed, these moths followed a similar flight pattern in reaching the sanctuary of the plant leaves, and in the 8 or 9 flights observed did not wander more than 6 feet from a straight line between plants. Each flight was completed in less than 3 to 4 seconds, indicating no hesitance by the moths in choosing or locating their refuge.

[1] Identified by Dr. E. L. Todd, USNM.

A careful search of the immediate vicinity revealed no other specimens present, either on the ground or on vegetation. The sky was clear; air movement during the period of flight observation was between 1 and 3 mph and at nearly right angles to the flight path.

It appeared that direct vision was involved, although no further attempt was made to test this possibility. If vision alone were involved, it is remarkable that a moth is able to see and identify, from a distance of 30 feet, a relatively low-growing plant, in bright sunshine.

REFERENCES

JONES, F. M. 1904. Pitcher-plant Insects — I. *Ent. News* 15: 14-17.
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